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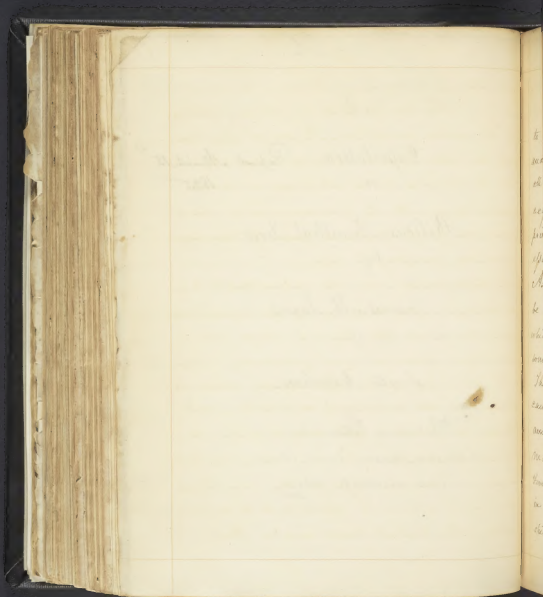
Dissertation, Papal March 15¹²
on 1825

Bilious Remittent Fever,
by

Francis M. James
of

South Carolina.

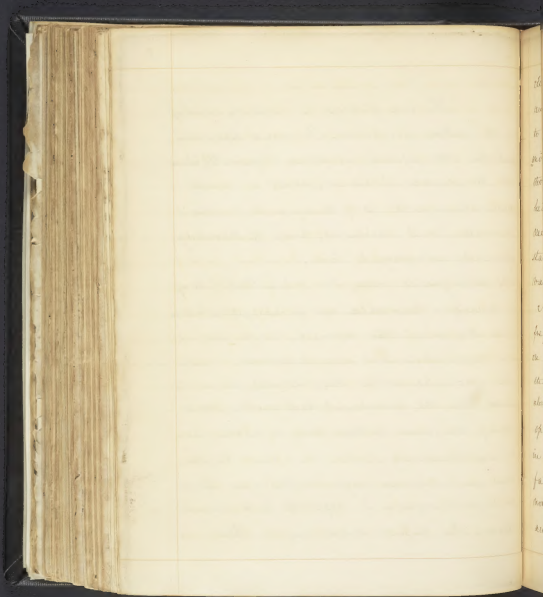
Post ignem altera domo
Subductum, Macies et nova febrilis,
Tervis incubuit Cohors.
Her.



This form of disease is peculiarly interesting to the southern practitioner. Its annual depredations and the utter defiance at which it frequently places all the resources of his art, render a minute acquaintance with its phenomena, and rational principles for its treatment, points of knowledge especially necessary to him.

As distinguished from the intermittent, it may be defined a fever made up of paroxysms between which there is no active dyspnoea, though there is some degree of remission and exacerbation daily.

The systematic writers have usually divided its causes into the predisponent and exciting, and among the former of these may be noticed the Marsh Miasmata. That Intermittent & Remittent fevers have a common origin in this cause though in different degrees of it appears to be the received opinion. In temperate seasons and in those



climates where the greatest heats do not prevail, and where the nature of the soil is unfavorable to the abundant exhalation of Miasmata, Intermittent fevers are the most frequent form of fever. But in those which are alternately scorched by fierce heats and drenched with heavy rains, where Miasmata exist in an extremely concentrated state, we are presented with Remittent fevers of various types and various degrees of malignancy.

Although Miasmata are probably the most frequent source of this fever, yet it is often dependent on other causes. It is thought by some writers that the influence of great atmospheric heat alone is capable of producing it. Against this opinion we have the authority of Fordyce, and in support of his assertion he appeals to the fact, that the countries which lie to the north of the Cape of Good Hope which are among the hottest on earth, yet being also

Very dry fevers are not remarkably prevalent. And likewise that certain classes of artisans who work in rooms heated to upwards of 130° F° are by no means peculiarly subject to fevers. Later and more extended observations however show that the most malignant forms of fever are endemic in many tropical countries, where no other adequate cause for their production could be ascribed, than excessive atmospheric heat.

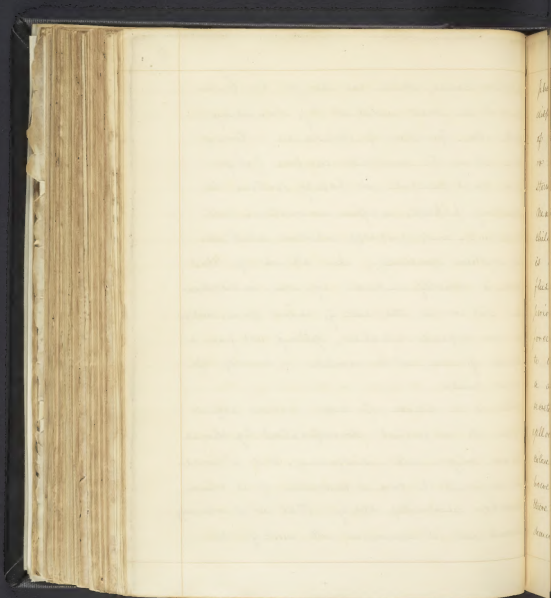
From the circumstance that they frequently prevail over extensive tracts of country, not confined to low grounds or marshy situations, but often avoiding them and clinging to those of opposite character, they have also been ascribed to epidemic influence. On this point however our knowledge is as yet limited, the peculiar nature of this influence or its dependence on the seasons has not been ascertained, and the most that is left us is but conjecture. There are a variety

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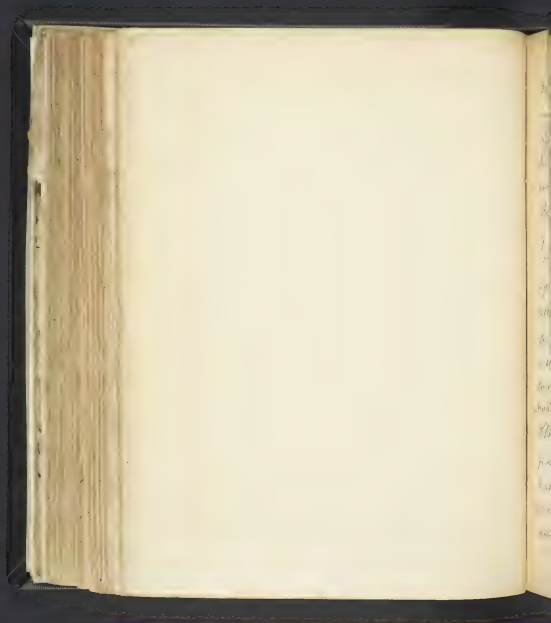
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of other causes which are thought by Galen, to act in most instances by concurring with the operation of Miasmata. Among these may be mentioned excessive fatigue from great mental or bodily exertion, the depressing passions, excessive evacuations, late watching, and probably whatever debilitates the system generally. An attack of this fever is usually induced, by some indiscretion in diet or in the use of ardent spirits, sleeping in an exposed situation, getting wet from a shower of rain, not to mention a variety of other causes.

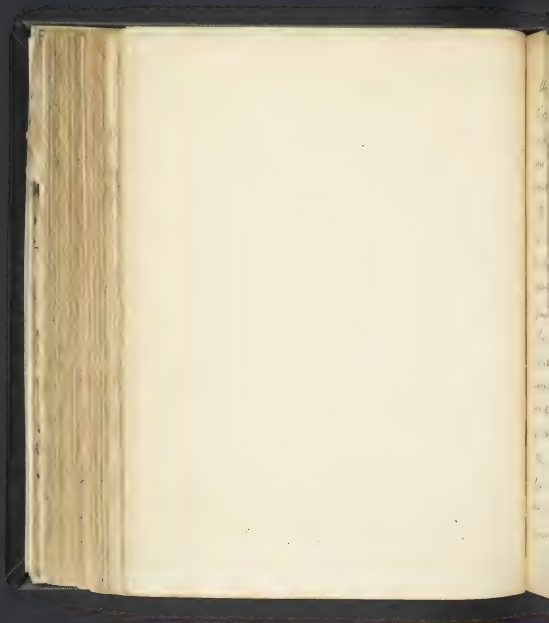
This is a disease of such various aspect from its important diversifications by climate local origin and idiosyncrasy, that it would be difficult to give a character of it which would universally apply. But as it ordinarily presents itself, it commences with most of the



phenomena of Intermittent fever. There is a disposition to shiver & stretch, with a sensation of weariness in the limbs, pain in the back & loins, and usually, some affection of the stomach with nausea or vomiting of bilious matter. At times there are well defined chills with violent rigors, more commonly there is a more sensation of chilliness with alternate flushes. After these have continued an indefinite time, fever is established. Periods of excitement are interspersed with periods of depression. In the early stage the skin is cool, moist & flushed, a sensation of intense suffocation of the nostrils, the tongue dark red and coated with a white or dark brown fur, the pulse is frequent and in diminished quantity. The secretions for the most part continue, as when there are discharges, they show a great or diminution of the ordinary quantity. In the



fever advances, the temperature to the end is
 increased inducing various degrees of cerebral
 affection, the skin and mucous membrane is reddish
 here, the respiration and vomiting is increased
 with heat or pain in the epigastric region.
 In the progress of the fever during the course
 of twenty four hours, the patients present
 themselves. There are a remission of all the
 symptoms, which takes place in the morning
 attended with slight perspiration, which however
 gives but little relief. the fever gradually
 rises and the exacerbation is at its height
 towards the evening. The symptoms daily exacer-
 bations do not always occur at regular periods.
 They observe more regularly the manner the
 fever approaches the Intermittent form: In most
 cases when it has more the type of continued
 fever, they observe it in regular intervals, frequently
 several in the course of the day.



the termination of this fever are either into Typhus, Intermittent, or Sibilicula or it may admit of solution by our remedies, and where the attack is not violent, by the efforts of the natural powers alone.

The next step in the progress of the disease is to be able to form a correct Diagnosis, by attending to the predominance of bilious symptoms in the disease, the season of the year and the local position.

In our Progress it is necessary to take into consideration, certain periods in fevers which were much insisted on by the older Physicians, and which indeed have obtained the sanction of many of the most eminent modern authorities.

The ancient days of Hippocrates, so called from his giving an accurate description of them, are the third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, seventeenth and twentieth. Each



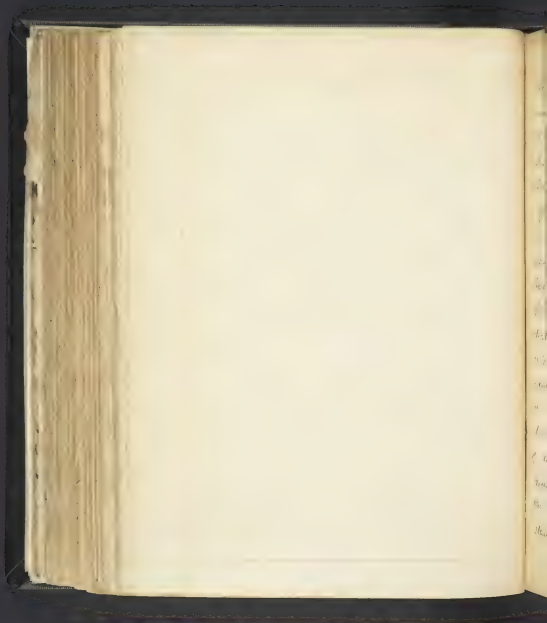
critical day, may seem at an end, or to
 be the in following 1. Thus if a patient
 finds himself better on a critical day, he
 may look for a still more favorable change on
 the critical day succeeding, and if on the
 contrary he finds himself worse on such a day,
 his situation will be still more unfavorable on
 the one which follows it. Again "if on the
 critical days the violence of the symptoms is
 much increased, we dread a fatal termination,
 and we have then nearer or more distant
 according to the degree of exacerbatation?
 The circumstances denoting a favorable termination
 are, the pulse becoming softer, slower, less irritated
 and more natural, the skin assuming a
 favorable and relaxed condition, determination
 to the head ceasing, the irritability of the
 stomach quieted, the urine assuming its natural
 secretion, the urine depositing a whitish sediment,



and the patient becomes up-
disturbed.

The most acute symptoms are involuntary twitchings
or startings, next are usually the hallucinations
of general convulsions, in which the patient
expires. Much more of the nature of the
involuntary, or rather as Delirium: the stomach
is usually available with great tenderness of the
Epigastrium, occasionally thin and watery
stools without odor or extremely offensive with
a total absence of bile as there, an irregular
distribution of temperature as cold wrists and feet
hands or palms, or symmetrical indications of the
most extreme exhaustion of both. At this time
the patient, just as before, is in a state of
in a state of mind, or delirium by the same
circumstances, which can be seen in the
state of general distress.

The appearance of the most common



in various. In the infantile form, symptoms have
 not been noticed during the course, but may, if it
 be first inflammation of the cerebellum &
 it, in the advanced stage of the disease, be
 Quodcumque. The brain, even in the infant, is
 generally more or less changed, most especially
 by congestions in them, and the great vessels
 usually impeded with a morbid or dark color
 bile.

In the treatment of this disease, the first remedy
 that claims our attention is Bleeding. The
 multitude of prejudices which for a while obscured its
 value, have now passed away, or they only exist
 in the fears of the vulgar: The extent to which
 it is to be carried must be left to the judgment
 of the practitioner, though the circumstances
 demanding its use are readily made out. When
 the patient is restless, with a dry and hot
 skin, an active and corded pulse, with much



determination to any particular organ, the propriety of the measure is sufficiently manifest. Much discrepancy of opinion exists, with regard to the use of the lancet in the Remittents of sultry climates. From the circumstances of their running their course so rapidly, and the symptoms of extreme debility which they so readily put on, many have been deterred from its use altogether or have only used it under the strictest limitations. But it should be recollected, that the violent excitement which exists at the commencement of these fevers, is itself a highly debilitating cause, and inflicts the patient much more than a well timed bloodletting, which is our most efficient agent in the reduction of this excitement. According to some writers, during the exacerbations and when it is at its height, is the best time to resort to this evacuation.



Under these circumstances it is better borne by the patient, and much more permanent & effectual relief is obtained from it during the following day. If we bleed during the remission says Dr Johnson, when the system is as it were in a state of collapse. Languor supervenes followed by a train of nervous symptoms and often the consequences. In aid of unobscured, local bleeding by cups or leeches may be resorted to with much advantage. The abstraction of blood immediately from the part affected, has a much more prompt and decided effect in relieving congestions or inflammations, and it may also be exceedingly useful where the apprehensions of debility deter us from general bloodletting.

Evacuation from the stomach and bowels, is likewise an indication of primary importance. In many instances it would be



necessary to determine, whether they should precede or follow evacuation. In the early stages when fever is not completely established, we may use the exhibition of Emetics or Purgatives Medicines, generally but we must at once to the disease. At a later period however when the sanguiferous system is involved, evacuation should be prevented. Evacuation from the stomach and bowels are demanded, when in the circumstances which determine the necessity of bloodletting, are added a morbidly languid and consolidated bowels. Evacuation is given when it is at yet an early stage of the fever. Their effects we are taught, are not limited to the mere evacuation of the contents of the stomach. They break the morbid associations which exist in fevers, restore the systematic duty nature an equal distribution of blood throughout the system. It is after this employment



the stomach & the intestines, and the longer
 the action, & whether it then is terminated.

From these two circumstances, which are in
 a further use of medicine, we may resort to the
 Purgative medicine. From these circumstances in our
 employment of them is necessary. If excitement
 should be great, we exhibit those which best
 calculated to relieve this excitement. Such as the
 Emetics in combination with one or more of the
 drastic Cathartics, appears to have most evidence
 in its favor. The emetics should be selected,
 at the time for administering the medicine.
 If given during the exacerbation, it is apt to be
 rejected by vomiting, or it lies on the stomach
 without operating, producing extreme distress to
 the patient. To aid the operation of those articles
 emetica may be employed with much advantage,
 and the mildest of them are usually best.
 In the exhibition of purgatives a circumstance



pointed out to us by Dr. Langman, should not
 be overlooked. It frequently happens that though
 copious mucus & flatulent discharge are induced,
 the fever does not abate, the heart is still
 dulled, the stomach insensate, and the tongue
 loaded. The animal soon falls over the thick
 mucous coat formed by the collected secretions
 of the stomach, the animal of which is
 similar to a sensation of weight, action in the
 bowels, &c. To obtain the most certain view of
 nature in process, make about twenty grains of
 mucous matter in the stomach, to be carried off
 by suction, & some are to the contrary fact.
 By this means I can say & lately I have seen
 brought in of, which are too numerous, that a
 great improvement has been made upon the stomach.
 Among these the most striking is the stomach,
 and I am not only, to demonstrate experiment
 of the extent to which this is true, and to



Keep the hammock in a salubrious condition, some-
 one of the central parts with a serious frequency
 the Quaker Tars, are in a condition of decay
 loss. For allaying the heat, and a con-
 siderable amounting the heat, and it has
 has been paid by various Physicians to be
 bathing. The circumstances which should influence
 in the employment of it are, when the heat
 is steadily above the natural standard, the mind
 active, and the skin dry or with dry, parched
 sweat. Of the several modes in which the cold
 bath is given, the most common is in
 cold water & simple & water, & the most
 cold and mild. The temperature of the water
 causes a more gradual introduction of cold,
 and its effect on the system is less violent as there arising
 some evidence of plunging the patient in water.
 With the same view when the excitement is
 very great, may be given by water after



colds or fever. We are furnished however, a great
 a low degree of exposure to this weather, and
 by it the weather is said to be not too low.
 In this stage of the fever we also used the
 refrigerant. The patient is said to be very
 improved, which coincides with the fact that
 & Calcutta constitute the rest. The patient is now
 in a low state, the fever is not high.
 The patient is by the foregoing measures, in great
 rest to the temperature. But intention however
 is not actually to prevent the fever, but to the
 suggestion that a great deal of the patient's
 contributed to the nature of the fever, and in
 ultimately much increased practice. The patient
 must much take place in the fever, and in
 in the fever is not as the fever is not
 at the time of fever. But the patient is
 low condition, in subject to have specific
 fever, institutionally to their effect in meeting



perspiration. by this the action is rendered
 usually employed. Some opinions, however, exist
 with regard to the mode of administering this
 medicines. It was the opinion of Cullen, that the
 remedial powers depended upon the impression
 being made on the stomach by direct cruetising.
 But it is stated by Forster, and the propriety
 of the position is much doubted by Dr. Williams.
 That notwithstanding in this case, more or less
 efficacy is lost. It seems therefore that it should
 be given in a large dose as the stomach will
 bear without its creating nausea or vomiting,
 the Antimonial being here considered a specific
 in these actions, as the same may be that, moving
 back or forward as in the case of other sickness
 the action is more than the same in the
 course of disease is therefore more or less
 with time. It is now known that in acute
 the reason why in some cases vomiting occurs



on up, & a great system to give it force
 on its acknowledged basis. When the various
 numbers, & the various interests, are to be
 a condition. If the circumstances show, from
 any circumstances prove inadvisable, we may see
 the draught of Riemus, or the Neutral Christian
 then whatever action is subdued, should not
 opposed. Tendency be manifest, the resisting
 application is in its state. There is to be applied
 to the extremes, as the coast, angles or inside of
 the thighs. Some questions as to their utility
 will exist among practitioners. This difference
 may be attributed probably, to the different state
 of the system in which they are employed.
 We should always wait for the force and violence
 of the disorder, & the extent of the local mischief
 alone we need to them. The danger of
 in the habit is among the various kinds, & the
 state of the power. Yet the disease, that after



Considerable numbers have appeared, it may be
 given to prevent the return of the eruptions,
 as the same feeling that it is given in Intermitting,
 and further that it may be employed in the
 advanced stages of continued fever, when all
 suspicion of an inflammatory state is removed,
 and a general debility prevails. There are
 other circumstances however, which should
 influence us in the employment of this article,
 it is not to be given unless the tongue is
 bare and the skin in a moist or perspirable
 condition. There are other Tonics which are
 perhaps used with better effects, these are the
 Uguisura, Serpentaria, Eupatorium, Pylaeus &c.
 In Southern climates, when the hepatic apparatus is
 more or less implicated, or where the disease
 is intractable to the other remedies, the acid
 is very much demanded. It will be useful in
 the affections of the stomach & liver, as in



subdue the remains of the fever by its setting up its own peculiar action, is this remedy indicated.

There are yet other considerations in the treatment of this disease, of too much importance to be passed over. The strict antiphlogistic regimen, that is demanded renders it necessary that all additions sources of excitement should be guarded against.

All exercise of the mind or body is to be avoided.

The patient should be placed in a large & airy chamber, the light excluded and no more attention allowed than are absolutely necessary, and his bed clothes & linen should be frequently changed. In the measures which almost always exist,

Nature points out the course to be adopted, with regard to aliment. It should consist for the most part of unacidulated liquids, which serve to moisten, do as not however to oppress the stomach and create vomiting. These are



also palliatives of the painful sensation of thirst, a constant attendant of this fever. As thirst besides rendering the patient extremely uncomfortable is a powerful stimulus, it should as much as possible be diminished. In many instances it arises from a foul condition of the stomach, or a vitiated state of its mucous coat. In the first case an emetic is indicated in the latter we should correct the state of the mucous tissue with minute doses of Calomel, or some one of the Antimonials. Nausea is another affection, which is perhaps the most distressing in this disease. It may be owing to the presence of bile in the stomach, or to mere irritability of that organ. Should it depend on the former of these causes, which may be known by a bitter taste in the mouth with sour and then bilious vomitings, it may be relieved by cleansing the stomach with gentle emetics, or warm water, Chamomile tea &c. When it arises from

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small

imitation, we have a variety of remedies.

Among them may be enumerated, the Effervescent draught, Seltzer water, Lime water & milk, the sugar of Lead with a small proportion of Opium. Most of the essential oils, Pepper Vinegar, an old opium pill or anodyne Osmunda. External applications are also to be made, as a Pediluvium of warm water & Mustard, Sinapisms, fomentations or finally a blister over the abdomen. Such are the remedies we bring into requisition in combatting this disease. Should they prove ineffectual, and the case degenerate into a typhoid fever, the same indications that are presented for the treatment of genuine Typhus, are here equally applicable. As the Bilious Remittent Fever prevails in our native states & in those forms I have been accustomed to witness, we have too frequently to lament the inability of our remedies. Carolina yet mourns the loss of many of her most valued citizens, who afford melancholy instances of its fatal power, triumphing over all the obstacles, which art could suggest to arrest its progress.

44